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ABSTRACT

The Eugene Board of Education endorses the development of a variety of alternative programs through the cooperative efforts of educators, parents, pupils, and community representatives. The qualifications necessary for a program to be considered an alternative are listed, as are the elements required in alternative school proposals. The administrative channels for the submission of proposals are identified with the superintendent's requirements that must be met before a program will be implemented. Feedback forms to be utilized by reviewers of proposals are also included. (Author/MLF)

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ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

(POLICY AND PROCEDURES)

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Office of Special Projects
Eugene School District 4J
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EA 010 459

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

Policy Statement

The Board of Directors recognizes that the educational goals of School District 4J can best be attained through instructional approaches as diverse as students' needs within a pluralistic society. Therefore, the Board endorses the development of a variety of alternative programs through the cooperative efforts of educators, parents, pupils and community representatives.

An alternative program is here defined as any complete educational program that offers students a learning environment that is distinctive in structure as well as in curriculum. Alternative programs may differ from one another (as well as from prevailing educational norm) in areas such as (but not necessarily limited to) instructional methodology, specific curriculum content, time and place for learning, interpersonal relationships of adults and students, organization of staff, groups involved in making major administrative decisions and setting school policies, size of student body, methods of student/program evaluation and relative priorities placed on educational goals.

In order to be considered an alternative, as defined by the Board of Directors, a program must conform to the following:

I. The program must represent an alternative strategy for achieving the major educational goals and objectives of School District 4J, as defined by the Board of Directors. Although it can reprioritize those goals, it cannot eliminate them or substitute others for them unless a waiver is approved by the Board of Directors.

II. The program must abide by policies of the Board of Directors, District

administrative procedures, District curriculum programs, and District requirements. The program must also abide by state and federal rules and laws although, when appropriate, the Board of Directors will request waivers or changes in such rules or laws.

III. The program must be available to students, parents and program staff by mutual consent. Programs designed to meet special needs of students where admission is not consensually determined by the program staff, students and their parents/guardians are therefore excluded from District 4J's definition of alternative programs.

IV. Other than necessary start-up costs (to which no program is entitled by dint of being designated an "alternative," but for which any alternative program may contend with other pilot and experimental programs/projects throughout the district), the district-supported budget for any alternative program must not exceed the per pupil cost of educating pupils in other comparable programs at the same school level, except as approved by the Board of Directors.

Alternative programs within School District 4J may take the following forms:

1) magnet programs that draw their student bodies from throughout School District 4J, but that share facilities and/or some administrative/support staff with "regular" programs. ("Regular" in this context is not being used in a pejorative sense; it seems merely to be a convenient term with which to contrast "alternative.")

2) magnet programs also drawing their student bodies from throughout the district, but administered and housed as autonomous units separate from "regular" schools.

3) programs that are administered and housed as autonomous units separate from "regular" programs, but that primarily serve students from one specific

ttendance area.

4) neighborhood programs that serve the same attendance area as "regular" programs with which they share facilities and/or some administrative staff--but that offer students distinct educational options.

Procedures

The following procedures should be followed by persons who wish to propose alternative schools.

All programs should be proposed in writing. The proposal format should include (but not necessarily be confined to) the following elements:

1) Abstract. A brief summary of major elements of the program.

2) Basic educational assumptions. Identify and explain relevant educational assumptions upon which the program is based. Assumptions relating to the nature and purpose of education, the ways in which learning takes place and the educational needs of pupils to be served by the program are suggested.

3) General goals. Identify and explain the general goals of the program and the comparative emphasis to be placed on the various goals. Goals may be stated from one or more perspectives such as:

(a) Pupil and/or teacher performance.

(b) Cognitive, affective and psychomotor concepts, skills and attitudes to be taught.

(c) Instructional processes.

(d) Teacher-pupil relationships.

4) Operational plan. Describe the following aspects of the plan for operation of the program:

(a) Any special curriculum emphasis in terms of content, methods or materials.

(b) Staff-pupil interactions within the program and with other existing programs, including pupil discipline; faculty relationships;

scheduling of pupils' time, and share use of facilities, equipment and materials, curriculum offerings and specialists.

(c) Areas in which staff, parents, and pupils will be involved in the decision-making process for implementation and operation of the program, and manner in which they will be involved. This will include a description of the method by which staff, parents, and pupils may develop and submit recommendations for filling all staff positions. Recommendations for hiring of all staff will concur with the procedures recommended by the staff, parents, and pupils, within the limitations of legal requirements and district personnel policies.

(d) Ways in which parents, paraprofessionals and other community resource persons will participate in the program.

(e) A description of the necessary staff roles in the program. This will include a clarification of the administrative responsibilities and time involved in the operation of the program.

(f) Criteria and process for enrollment of pupils.

(g) Identification of district policies and administrative procedures which must be modified or waived in order to implement the program and why such modifications or waivers are necessary to achieve the goals and objectives of the program.

(h) Facilities requirements for the program, including amount and design of space and desired location.

(i) Support services required for the program, including custodial, security, secretarial, pupil services, food services, and transportation.

(j) A calendar of tasks necessary to implement the program.

5) Budget. Identify proposed expenditures, operational costs and contributions from the alternative program to existing programs for shared facilities,

staff, equipment, materials, etc. The budget should clearly indicate how operational costs are comparable on a per-student allotment basis to ongoing costs of operating other programs at same school level throughout the district. It should also indicate if "start-up" costs are being sought through private foundations, federal agencies, or District 4J-sponsored developmental fund (e.g., TIP), and identify nature of needed expenditures. (Start-up costs are here defined as those extra expenditures necessary to begin some new programs but which will not continue after those programs become fully operational. Start-up costs include - but are not necessarily limited to - such items as purchase and/or renovation of facilities, purchase of an initial inventory or general and instructional equipment and supplies, staff employment and travel expenses for planning and evaluation purposes and in-service education of staff.)

Guidance to groups interested in utilizing the above format to prepare proposals shall be available upon request from the Special Projects Office. This guidance shall include (but not be confined to) assistance in determining feasible timelines for the development, planning and implementation of proposal programs. These timelines shall, as much as possible, facilitate the orderly establishment of alternative programs within the calendar requirements of School District 4J for such activities as budget preparation, levy decisions, staff selection, and facility procurement.

However, if these calendar requirements should be considered unduly restrictive by a particular group, that group shall not be bound to a uniform set of deadlines such as might be imposed by the district-wide budget-making process.

Administrative channels for the submission of proposals shall be as follows:

A. Magnet programs that draw student bodies from throughout School

District 4J, but that share facilities and/or some administrative/support staff with "regular" programs

If a strong initial preference for a proposed program is clearly stated, the channels for submission of the proposal shall be as follows:

1) Principal of school involved
2) Special Projects Assistant
3) Director and curriculum specialist of region involved
4) Review committee to be established by the Special Projects Assistant and including representatives of the following groups: administrative staff, teachers, students, parents and community members (The function of this group shall be advisory.)
5) Superintendent
6) Board of Directors

If a strong initial preference for location is not stated, channels for submission of the proposal shall be as follows:

1) Special Projects Assistant
2) Review committee
3) Superintendent
4) Board of Directors

B. Magnet programs also drawing their student bodies from throughout the district, but administered and housed as autonomous units separate from "regular" schools

1) Special Projects Assistant
2) Review committee
3) Superintendent
4) Board of Directors

C. Magnet programs that are administered and housed as autonomous units separate from "regular" programs, but that primarily serve students from a

specific attendance area

If a strong initial preference for the specific attendance area is clearly stated, the channels for submission of the proposal shall be as follows:

1) Special Projects Assistant

2) Director and curriculum specialist of region involved.

3) Review committee

4) Superintendent

5) Board of Directors

If an initial strong preference for a specific attendance area is not clearly stated, channels for submission of the proposal shall be as follows:

1) Special Projects Assistant

2) Review committee

3) Superintendent

4) Board of Directors

D. Neighborhood programs that serve same attendance areas as the "regular" programs with which they share facilities and/or some administrative staff--but that offer students a distinct learning environment

If a strong initial preference for a specific attendance area is clearly stated, channels for submission of the proposal shall be as follows:

1) Principal of building involved

2) Special Projects Assistant

3) Director and curriculum specialist of region involved

4) School Advisory Council

5) Superintendent

6) Board of Directors

Since ultimate authority to approve or disapprove any District 4J program

resides with the Board of Directors and the Superintendent as the Board's agent, any proposal that originates with the Superintendent or the Board of Directors need not be submitted through the administrative channels stipulated above.

Possibly subsequent to approval but necessarily prior to implementation, alternative programs must clarify the following to the Superintendent's satisfaction:

1) Specific instructional objectives which relate to the general goals of the program will be developed by the program's staff in cooperation with members of the group who proposed the option and the district's Research, Development and Evaluation Division.

2) Evaluation processes for teachers, pupils and the program will be developed. The program's staff and members of the group who proposed the option will participate in development of the evaluation procedures in cooperation with the district's research department. The pilot period for a new optional program will be determined jointly by the group proposing the option and the responsible administrators and will be specified in the evaluation procedures. Evaluation of the program should be based on how well the program is achieving district goals and its own goals and objectives, with answers to these questions:

a) How will ongoing evaluative feedback be incorporated into program improvement and modification?

b) How will the information be collected? What form will the information be in? Who will provide the information?

c) Who will conduct the evaluation and who will process the information?

Criteria by which proposals under consideration shall be judged shall include the stipulations previously mentioned in the definition of alternative programs. In addition, proposals shall be judged by feedback from reviewers

on the basis of the following four questions:

1) In your opinion, does the proposed program fit the Board of Directors' definition of an alternative program?

2) In your opinion, is there sufficient need and/or want to warrant the proposed program? (In order to believe that there's "sufficient need and/or want," you don't have to rely upon an arsenal of statistics conclusively proving that the majority of District 4J parents and students will support or actually choose the proposed alternative. Rather, "sufficient need and/or want" can simply mean that the proposal has given you some reason to suppose that enough students will voluntarily enroll in the proposed alternative to make it viable. If in doubt, rember that you can approve a proposal upon the condition that, prior to opening, the program will recruit enough students to demonstrate "sufficient need and/or want.")

3) How appropriate and/or potentially effective are the goals stated in the proposal as responses to the stated needs and/or wants?

4) The bulk of the proposal consists of a "plan of implementation." The "plan of implementation" should cover such specifics as special curriculum emphasis (if any), requests for modification of policy (again, if any), staff roles, etc.

In your opinion, does the "plan of implementation" represent an appropriate and potentially effective set of strategies for achieving the program's goals?

These four questions will be rated by reviewers on a 1-5 scale and averaged in order for a decision to be made regarding the approval or disapproval of a proposal. In order for any program to be approved, the average of all scores in response to the four questions must be 3 or less.

Given the above guidelines, reviewers will then make one of the following recommendations:

_____The proposal should be unconditionally approved.

_____ The proposal should be approved contingent upon the following:

_____

_____

_____ The proposal should be returned to the authors for revision. (See written comments above for specific suggestions.)

_____ Not sure.

_____ The proposal should not be approved.

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Rev. 12/76
jd

Feedback Form
for Reviewers of Alternative School
Proposals

_____ _____
(Name of Program/School) (Reviewer's Name)

1. In your opinion, does the proposed program fit the Board of Directors' definition of an alternative program? (See Attachment A for the Board's definition.)

   Please record your response by checking one of the five boxes below.

yes, very well	somewhat	not sure	poorly	no, not at all
1	2	3	4	5

Comment:

2. In your opinion, is there sufficient need and/or want to warrant the proposed program? (In order to believe that there's "sufficient need and/or want," you don't have to rely upon an arsenal of statistics conclusively proving that the majority of District 4J parents and students will support or actually choose the proposed alternative. Rather, "sufficient need and/or want" can simply mean that the proposal has given you some reason to suppose that enough students will voluntarily enroll in the proposed alternative to make it viable. If in doubt, remember that you can approve a proposal upon the condition that, prior to opening, the program will recruit enough students to demonstrate "sufficient need and/or want.")

sufficient need/want	some need/want	not sure	little need/want	no need/want
1	2	3	4	5

Comment:

3. How appropriate and/or potentially effective are the goals stated in the proposal as responses to the stated needs and/or wants?

very appropriate	somewhat appropriate	not sure	somewhat inappropriate	very inappropriate
1	2	3	4	5

Comment:

4. The bulk of the proposal consists of a "plan of implementation." In this section, you should find the answers to your questions concerning "how." The "plan of implementation" should cover such specifics as special curriculum emphasis (if any), requests for modification of policy (again, if any), staff roles, etc.

   For a more detailed listing of topics which are usually covered in the "plan of implementation," see Attachment B, which suggests a standard format for alternative school proposals. (Bear in mind, however, that the format is only suggested, and might have been legitimately revised by the authors of the proposal that you are now reviewing.)

   In your opinion, does the "plan of implementation" (pp. in this proposal) represent an appropriate and potentially effective set of strategies for achieving the program's goals?

very appropriate/ potentially effective	somewhat appropriate	not sure	somewhat inappropriate	very inappropriate
1	2	3	4	5

Comment:

The preceding four questions must be averaged in order for a decision to be made regarding the approval or disapproval of a proposal. Remember, in order for any program to be approved, the average of all scores in response to the four questions must be 3 or less.

Given the above guidelines, what is your recommendation?

_____ The proposal should be unconditionally approved.

_____ The proposal should be approved contingent upon the following:

_____

_____

_____ The proposal should be returned to the authors for revision. (See written comments above for specific suggestions.)

_____ Not sure

_____ The proposal should not be approved.

Comment:

jd
April 1976